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Macromedia's Dreamweaver 1.0

Stephen Ellerin. **E Media Professional**. Wilton: Jun 1998.Vol.11, Iss. 6; pg. 73, 2 pgs

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Abstract (Document Summary)

Macromedia's Dreamweaver 1.0 is reviewed. Dreamweaver is a visual HTML authoring tool that gives users precise control over HTML source code and enables Dynamic HTML and JavaScript applications. Designed for both the novice Web designer and the professional Web master, Dreamweaver combines the productivity of a visual tool with the control of a text editor through its functional, easy-to-use interface.

Full Text (1362 words)

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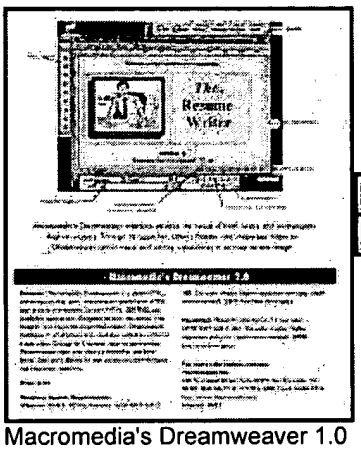
If your content has the stuff that dreams are made of, ⓘMacromedia has a program to help you weave your dreams into finished Web pages. If you're a novice Web-weaver, Dreamweaver offers all you need to know about Web publishing; if you're an experienced Web master, Dreamweaver will delight you by drafting accurate HTML 3.2 and DHTML (Dynamic Hypertext Markup Language) code and providing the tools you need to tweak that code.

DREAMWEAVER'S LOOM Most users will start in Dreamweaver's WYSIWYG Document window to lay out a Web page, paste or import text and images, or enter text directly. Dreamweaver's Launcher "palette" floats beneath the Document window, to launch other windows, palettes, and inspectors. "Palettes" have either buttons that help you manage tasks (such as the Launcher Palette) or objects (such as tables, forms, and Shockwave movies) that you can drag into the Document window. As you drop an object in place, a dialog box prompts you for supporting information, such as default text to replace an image in nonimage browsers or button names on forms.

Dreamweaver's "Inspectors" are smaller windows whose dialog boxes let you "inspect" and modify HTML details, without having to touch HTML code. For example, dialog boxes in the Properties Inspector change to reflect the properties of the element you are editing, such as link and format options for text and graphics, or cell options for tables. Similarly, the HTML Inspector is a dedicated HTML editor. As you work in the Document window, the Inspector highlights and updates the code that underlies your page. WEAVING FROM A PATERN To weave a uniform look throughout a site, you can save any document as a template, and transfer its settings to other documents. Dreamweaver includes four basic templates to string the loom for new Web-weavers. If you have content that recurs on several pages in a Web site, store it in a Library. You can make a library item of any document or any portion of a document. Update the library file, and Dreamweaver will update its content throughout that site.



Macromedia's Dreamweaver 1.0

The Properties Inspector, which floats beneath Dreamweaver's document window, enables the user to modify HTML details without learning HTML code.

Like most browsers, Dreamweaver displays both JPEG and GIF images, plus PNG, the new, patent-free replacement for the GIF format. To show site surfers the big picture, the Image Map Editor helps you create and edit clientside image maps. To add frames, simply drag your mouse, and Dreamweaver creates the frameset file that tells a browser how to draw each frame and which files to load into each frame. The Properties Inspector then lets you tweak the properties of your framesets and frames. Dreamweaver even codes alternate content for older or text-based browsers. (Without this alternate text, older browsers show a blank page, yet this point draws no mention in the printed manual and doesn't figure prominently in the **online** help.)

Forms almost weave themselves as you drag and drop Text fields or Buttons from Dreamweaver's palettes and inspectors.

Dreamweaver's FTP features help you transfer files to your site host's remote server. It recreates the structure of your local files on the remote system, or vice versa, automatically creating directories where needed. Dreamweaver switches among multiple sites from a drop-down list. To facilitate collaborating on a Web site, team members can "check in" and "check out" files from the remote server. Dreamweaver tracks who has a particular file checked out. Unfortunately, it lacks a Site Map feature to help track and manage interconnected pages and links.

DYNAMIC HTML FOR THE REST OF US Many of the most advanced features of Dreamweaver require the latest generation of Web browsers. Specifically, Dreamweaver implements four DHTML-related features: Layers, Styles and Style Sheets, Timelines, and Behaviors.

Think of a layer as if it were a clear sheet of acetate that you could position exactly over any part of a Web page. With layers, Webmasters can finally satisfy art directors who demand the kind of precise placement that they have on the printed page.

Styles work much as they do in a word processor. Dreamweaver allows either the LINK or IMPORT tag. Timelines simulate animation by changing the position, size, visibility, or stacking order of layers over time, or by replacing

one image with another. For example, when you drag an object across a layer, Dreamweaver automatically generates the JavaScript that recreates your movement.

In DHTML you can specify an event (such as **mouseover**) to **trigger** one or more behaviors (such as play a sound file). Dreamweaver includes several predefined behavior actions, and you can add your own with JavaScript.

Unfortunately, there is no way to guarantee that all of your site visitors will have the version 4.x browsers that display DHTML. So Dreamweaver provides a "Check Target Browsers" feature to tell you whether your tags or attributes work in your target browsers. You can check a document, a directory, or an entire site, based on predefined and modifiable profiles for Netscape Navigator or Microsoft **Internet** Explorer running on Windows, Mac, and UNIX systems.

Webmasters who never trust a line of code they didn't write will also find the tools they need in Dreamweaver. As mentioned earlier, you can enter code directly into the HTML Inspector. However, try a code that Dreamweaver doesn't recognize, and it highlights the unknown tags, defines the error, and suggests how to correct it.

For full-featured editing, "Roundtrip HTML" lets you move your document seamlessly between Dreamweaver and a text-based HTML editor. Dreamweaver is integrated with, and ships with, Allaire's HomeSite (for Windows) and ⓘBare Bones Software's BBEdit (for Macintosh). Switching to either editor positions your cursor in that editor at the line that you were editing, and returning to Dreamweaver automatically updates your document. When you return, Dreamweaver rewrites overlapping tags, closes "illegal" unopened tags, and removes extra closing tags. Advanced programmers can turn off rewriting in Preferences or edit Dreamweaver's SourceFormat profile.

A FEW LOOSE THREADS IN A VERY WORTHY WEAVE On the whole, the Dreamweaver manual is well-written and conveys the program's features simply and clearly to the layman, with supplemental explanations for the experienced Web crafter. The manual would be clearer, however, with more illustrative screen shots. And an occasional explanation could be worded more clearly. For example, the section on naming radio buttons reminds an HTML programmer what needs to be done, but does not explain to the novice how to do so. Still, your major complaint with the manual will be that it constantly refers you to additional material in On-Line Help.

The On-Line Help runs in your primary browser (both Netscape Communicator 4.04 and Microsoft **Internet** Explorer 4.0 ship on the CD). Here, several well-executed tutorials, in ⓘMacromedia's Shockwave, show you how to manage some of Dreamweaver's trickier capabilities. (New tips and techniques appear monthly in the Dreamweaver Developers' Center at http://www.dreamweaver.com.)

In the program, itself, a few little quirks might trouble your sleep, without interrupting your dreams. For example, the Document window accurately displays a table's cell Margin, but cell Padding only shows in your browser. Similarly, when creating text links, a drop-down list lets you select from a list of links you have already accessed in the current document. Strangely, there is no similar list to help you create links from an image. Finally, although Dreamweaver's spell-check is a blessing, its window blocks your document during the check operation, making it hard to see the context in which any questioned word appears.

However, the complaint list is short. ⓘMacromedia has assembled a fine, stable product that offers both the novice Web dreamer and the experienced Web magician the tools each needs to produce sophisticated, attractive Web pages that work as intended. Throw in cross-platform development, and ⓘMacromedia delivers a package that few other Web tools can match.

[Reference]
Companies Mentioned

[Reference]
Allaire Corporation
One Alewife Center, Cambridge, MA 02140; 617/761-2000; Fax 617/761-2001; http://www.allaire.com; INFoLINK #402
ⓘBare Bones Software, Inc. P.O. Box 1048, Bedford, MA 01730; 781/687-0700; Fax 781/687-0711; http://www.barebones.com; INFoLINK #407

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Stephen Ellerin (gramps3000@aol.com) directs The Great American Publishing Society from Greenwich, Connecticut
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New dynamic HTML authoring tool from Astound

Anonymous. **Information Today**. Medford: Jan 1998.Vol.15, Iss. 1; pg. 38, 1 pgs

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Subjects:	Web browser, Design, Web sites, Software packages, Product introduction
Classification Codes	9120 Product specific treatment, 9190 US, 5240 Software & systems, 9000 Short article
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Abstract (Document Summary)

Designed for Webmasters, graphic designers, developers, and business professionals, the newly announced Dynamite from Astound lets users create visually rich, interactive Web pages without the need for scripting or programming. Since these Web pages use Dynamic HTML for playback, there is no need to install plug-ins or proprietary controls on the viewer's browser.

Full Text (527 words)

Copyright Information Today, Inc. Jan 1998

Designed for Webmasters, graphic designers, developers, and business professionals, the newly announced Dynamite from Astound lets users create visually rich, interactive Web pages without the need for scripting or programming. And, since these Web pages use Dynamic HTML for playback, there is no need to install plug-ins or proprietary controls on the viewer's browser.

Dynamic HTML represents the next stage in the evolution of the **Internet**, according to the Astound announcement. Although HTML has enabled authors to create graphical and easy-to-navigate Web content, it prohibited the use of multimedia or sophisticated interactivity because of the need for proprietary plugins and controls that take too long to download and are often platform dependent. This prevents content creators from delivering on the full potential of the "electronic" Web. With Dynamic HTML, content creators will be able to deliver high-impact user experiences with rich graphical layouts, dynamic time-based animation, and sophisticated interactivity without the need for proprietary plug-ins or controls, according to Astound.

However, the challenge is that Dynamic HTML requires content creators to master a whole new set of HTML tags

and rules together with complex scripting and programming. They must also customize content for incompatible browser implementations (ⓘMicrosoft's DHTML vs. Netscape's DHTML) and for backward compatibility with older browsers.

Astound Dynamite solves the problem and overcomes these hurdles, says the company. With Astound Dynamite, content creators can produce interactive, time-sequenced multimedia pages using a point-and-click user interface that requires no knowledge of HTML, scripting, or programming.

Astound Dynamite's "WYSIWeb" technology and its Publish Wizard output Web pages in multiple formats with embedded "sensing" code, allowing for viewing with either Netscape Communicator, Microsoft **Internet** Explorer 4.0, or in static HTML for the older generations of browsers.

Astound Dynamite includes a number of key features and benefits: * Support for templates and master pages that allow the content creator to standardize the look and feel of the pages

* A rich set of graphics and layout tools that enable the user to create pages without worrying about HTML's layout constraints

* Robust multimedia capabilities, such as path animation tools, media tools, and transition effects that let authors create an engaging user experience

* The "Timeline" window that allows for precise time-synchronization of multiple events and objects

* Sophisticated point-and-click interactivity that goes beyond traditional hyper-linking, providing control of other objects on the page, **rollover** and **trigger** effects, timeline control, and complex branch navigation

* An **Internet** Component toolbar, which allows users to embed Java applets, ActiveX controls, JavaScript, VB Script, and HTML in the pages

Astound Dynamite is now available through major retail outlets and directly from the company for $124 with an introductory $25 rebate offer.

In related news, Astound has also announced WebCast Professional, the first push product to support Microsoft **Internet** Explorer 4.0, Netscape Communicator, and Dynamic HTML. WebCast Professional features drop-in installation, a user-friendly interface, and a templatedriven WYSIWeb creation tool. In addition, WebCast Professional includes a centralized channel-updating module that runs on NT servers.

Astound WebCast Professional is compatible with most middleware tools and will extract information from ODBC databases. Pricing for WebCast Professional begins at $1,995.

Source: Astound, Inc., Palo Alto, CA, 650/845-6200; http://www.astound.com.

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